"Z" overlaid symbols which are substitutes for one or more base layer symbols may provide a free game and/or some other prize. Substitute symbols "stand in" for other symbols according to predefined game rules. For example, a "wild card" symbol may be substituted for any "cherry" symbol. A "Z" overlaid symbol above a special (e.g., animated) base layer symbol may provide a free game and/or some other prize.

[0172] Still further, extended progressive win evaluation methods are possible within the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, a "Z" overlaid symbol matching a base layer symbol may indicate a progressive win. A "Z" overlaid symbol may indicate a chance at a progressive win, while the base layer provides the win/loss. The base layer may provide a progressive win, and the "Z" layer may indicate a win multiplier or a progressive game level.

[0173] When a plurality of "Z" levels are presented, additional win evaluation methods are possible within the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, a three of a kind win **1606** completely in the "Z" dimension is possible (see FIG. **27**). Of course, any number of n-kind wins (e.g., four of a kind, five of a kind, etc.) may be extended in the "Z" dimension. In one embodiment, symbols from different layers may be threaded together to form pay lines.

[0174] Returning to FIG. **30**, once the win evaluation is performed, the controller **100** graphically presents the win/loss to the player (block **1952**). Depending on the game mode, the graphical display may take on a variety of forms. For example, credits won on each layer and total credits may be displayed separately. Of course, a person of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that many different ways of displaying the win/loss to the player may be used without departing from the scope or spirit of the present invention. Subsequently, the routine **500** exits.

I claim:

1. A gaming apparatus, comprising:

a display unit that is capable of generating video images;

a user input device;

a value input device; and

a controller operatively coupled to the display unit, the user input device, and the value input device, the controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to the processor,

the controller being programmed to determine that a wager has been received from a player via the value input device;

the controller being programmed to cause the display unit to generate an image of a multilayer game, the multilayer game comprising a plurality of layers,

each layer having at least one plane with at least one symbol position in which at least one symbol is disposed, at least two layers of the plurality of layers being displayed such that the planes of the at least two layers are not coplanar, and at least one layer of the at least two layers having a plurality of symbol positions in which a plurality of symbols are disposed;

the controller being programmed to determine a game outcome associated with the plurality of symbols disposed in the plurality of symbols positions of the at least one layer;

the controller being programmed to provide a payout according to the game outcome;

the controller being programmed to determine a multilayer game outcome associated with the at least one symbol in each of the at least one symbol positions of the at least two layers; and

the controller being programmed to provide a payout being according to the multilayer game outcome.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the controller is programmed to determine if a trigger is received; and

the controller is programmed to determine a multilayer game outcome associated with at least one symbol in each of the at least one symbol positions of the at least two layers if the trigger is received.

3. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the trigger is received from the player.

4. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the trigger is based on a game event or a condition of the gaming apparatus.

5. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the trigger is received from an entity other than the player.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the controller is programmed to determine a multilayer game outcome associated with a payline that includes the at least one symbol positions of the at least two layers.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

a first layer and a second layer have a plurality of symbol positions in which a plurality of symbols are disposed; and

the controller is programmed to determine a multilayer game outcome associated with a payline that includes at least two symbol positions from the first layer and at least two symbol positions from the second layer.

8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the controller is programmed to cause the display unit to generate an image of a multilayer game, the multilayer game comprising a first and a second layer, only the first layer being displayed at a first time and the first and second layers being displayed at a second time.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the controller is programmed to cause the display unit to generate an image illustrating an interaction between the plurality of symbol positions of the at least one layer and at least one symbol disposed in the at least one symbol position of at least another layer.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein:

the controller is programmed to define a set of symbol positions according to the interaction between the plurality of symbol positions of the at least one layer and the at least one symbol disposed in the at least one symbol position of the at least another layer; and

the controller is programmed to determine the multilayer game outcome associated with symbols disposed in the set of symbol positions.